



Risks Newsletter



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Risks is the TUC's weekly online bulletin for safety reps and others, read each week by over 12,000 subscribers and 1,500 on the TUC website. To receive this bulletin every week, click [here](#). Past issues are [available](#). This edition contains [Useful links](#) [TUC courses for safety reps](#) [Disclaimer](#) and [Privacy statement](#).

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UNION NEWS

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Union alert prompts schools asbestos warning

Schools have been issued new official guidelines for dealing with classroom asbestos after teaching union NUT revealed over 100 teachers have died from contact with the substance in the past 20 years. After the union raised its concerns about the schools asbestos risk, the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) chemicals advisory committee, WATCH, investigated the potential exposure to asbestos fibres from pinning or tacking pupils' work to wall panels containing asbestos. The committee concluded that inserting and removing drawing pins into asbestos board should be avoided, prompting HSE to reissue guidelines to schools. NUT had urged HSE to reissue the advice after one of its members, Gina Lees, died aged 51 from an asbestos cancer ([Risks 248](#)), one of a series of recent asbestos-related deaths affecting school staff ([Risks 236](#)). Commenting on the new guidance, head of HSE's public services sector, John Cullen, said: "Teachers and pupils are not likely to be at risk in the course of their normal activities. Education employers should, nevertheless, ensure that they are aware of any asbestos in their schools and that they are actively managing it." The NUT figures revealed that 114 teachers had died as a result of coming into contact with asbestos over the last 20 years. Another 68 have died from asbestos-related cancer, but it is unclear whether those cases could be directly linked to asbestos in the classroom. HSE's own figures show 147 education workers died from mesothelioma in the decade between 1991 and 2000, 73 of them primary and secondary school teachers. NUT general secretary Steve Sinnott said: "Asbestos is very dangerous. Where asbestos may be present, teachers should take heed of the advice not to mount displays using drawing pins, staples or screws. Teachers and pupils should be properly protected from the hazards of asbestos and the NUT will continue its vigilance."

- [NUT news alert](#), [HSE news release](#) and updated guidance, Asbestos - An important message for schools [[pdf](#)]. [The Guardian](#).
- [HSE duty to manage asbestos webpage](#).

Family challenges CPS on teen work death

The family of a South Wales teenager unlawfully killed at work is attempting with union backing to take the Crown Prosecution Service to court for failing to bring manslaughter charges. A March 2005 inquest ruled that Daniel Dennis, who died aged 17 in April 2003 when he fell from a roof, was the victim of unlawful killing. He died in his first week working for North Eastern Roofing, which was subcontracted to Midas Construction. He had received no training in working at heights or in roofing and had not been provided with any safety equipment. Daniel's father, Peter Dennis, had warned the company that his son had no training and should not work on the roof. However he did so, and as he moved across the roof, he passed over a roof light which gave way under his weight causing him to fall approximately 28ft to the floor below. Over a year after the inquest verdict, the CPS has still not brought forward charges. As a result, the family's trade union, the GMB, has instructed Thompsons Solicitors to apply for a judicial review. Allan Garley, regional secretary of the GMB, said: "The death of a 17-year-old boy in his first week at work is an absolute tragedy. The GMB isn't after vengeance, but we want employers who kill workers to be properly held to account."

- [Thompson Solicitors news release](#).
- [TUC/Hazards deadly business campaign](#). [Centre for Corporate Accountability](#).

Rail action to defend safe staffing

Rail union RMT has announced strike ballots over threatened staff cuts at South Eastern Trains, which it warned would compromise safety. The dispute follows the imposition of new staff-cutting working arrangements in November 2005. "These procedures were issued without

due regard to the proper negotiating process and have serious implications, particularly as they will no doubt lead to a less safe environment for both our members and the general public,” said RMT general secretary Bob Crow. A separate ballot is also underway among South Eastern Trains guards after the company reneged on a commitment to improve staffing of barriers at certain stations. Both ballot results will be announced on 12 April. “Following years of assaults on staff and a disruptive element travelling from certain areas, South Eastern Trains agreed and gave a commitment to gate and employ staff at Hastings, Ramsgate, Dover Priory and Folkestone,” said Bob Crow. “The agreement was reneged upon by management and this can only result in one thing - an increase in attacks on staff and passengers.” He said: “RMT will not stand by and allow the company to dictate that our members must work in an unsafe environment and be in constant fear of attacks and fear of losing their livelihoods should such an attack occur.”

- [RMT news release.](#)

NUMAST welcomes 'fair treatment' guidance

Shipping union NUMAST has helped to secure agreement on new global guidelines to prevent seafarers from being scapegoated after accidents at sea. General secretary Brian Orrell led the seafarers' side at top-level talks on internationally-applicable principles to ensure the fair treatment of seafarers following maritime incidents. The meeting of a special working group established by the international maritime (IMO) and labour (ILO) organisations agreed a detailed draft of the guidelines and recommended that governments implement them with effect from July this year. The expert group was reacting to growing concern that authorities were acting against masters and officers before any wrong-doing had been proven in court. Brian Orrell, who served as vice-president of the working group, said: “They are only guidelines, so we have to accept that some countries may not adhere to them – but they provide a valuable

starting point and uphold the concept of fair treatment for seafarers.” The guidelines stress that seafarers are “entitled to protection against coercion and intimidation from any source during or after any investigation into a maritime accident”. They add that in any investigation seafarers should be “treated in a manner which preserves their basic human dignity at all times” and should have the right to independent legal advice.

- [NUMAST news release.](#)

OTHER NEWS

HSE warning on NHS violence

NHS Boards must tighten up their procedures for protecting staff from violent attacks, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has said. The warning comes after Ayrshire and Arran Health Board was fined £6,400 after pleading guilty at Ayr Sheriff Court to breaching the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. HSE's investigation identified deficiencies in the Board's systems for managing violence and aggression at the site. This included a lack of controlled access to clinical areas within the accident and emergency department at Ayr Hospital. In a July 2003 incident, an assailant entered the department and assaulted three members of staff, after producing a knife that had been concealed. HSE had previously given advice in relation to the systems for managing violence and aggression in the department. HSE principal inspector Douglas Philp said: “NHS Trusts need to recognise that they have duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act to assess the risks and put practical control measures in place. We hope the fine imposed sends a warning to other Trusts to ensure they have reviewed their procedures to prevent such serious incidents from happening again.” New HSE backed research says measures to help healthcare staff deal with violence at work can make a difference – but only where they have “a solid grounding in day-to-day situations”. The University of Nottingham

research, funded by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), concluded that to achieve effective standards, training has to blend with other preventive systems and procedures that are already in place in an organisation. The researchers concluded it is important that training does not just focus on promoting individual skills and knowledge. They added that poorly thought-out training is having a negative effect, leaving staff feeling more anxious and less capable of coping with the verbal and physical abuse aimed at them.

- HSE news releases on the [Ayr prosecution](#) and on the [new research. Violence and aggression management training for trainers and managers](#), RR440, 2006.

Minister calls for safer public procurement

The public sector must use its buying power to push for safer construction projects, the safety minister has said. “Each year approximately 17 workers are killed on essential projects procured by the public sector,” said Lord Hunt, minister for health and safety. “This human cost is too high a price to pay, both economically and ethically. I want the public sector to be exemplary construction clients. I want them to ‘buy for life’ – meaning they become clients who influence the design, construction, maintenance and use of a building, and help raise health and safety standards for all workers involved in such projects.” The minister added: “The public sector commissions around 40 per cent of construction work in the UK each year – hospitals, schools, libraries - at a cost to the taxpayer of over £33 billion.” Lord Hunt said the 2012 Olympic Games in London “offers an ideal opportunity for all those involved in construction to show how they can work together to improve client performance on public sector projects. Government has much to gain from raising its game and controlling construction projects more effectively. It is only by taking ownership of health and safety performance, showing leadership in setting standards and working in partnership with the

industry that we will drive out poor health and safety on schemes that we are responsible for.”

- [HSE news release. HSE construction webpages.](#)

Construction work ‘more stressful’

Britain’s construction sites are getting more stressful, a survey has found. A majority of UK construction professionals surveyed by the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) felt that the construction industry today is more stressful than it was five years ago. Almost 1,000 construction managers and other professionals took part in the survey. It found that of the 68 per cent who reported they had suffered from stress, anxiety or depression only 27 per cent had sought medical advice, and only 6 per cent of those who had experienced occupational stress had taken time off. Over half of all respondents (55 per cent) said inadequate staffing levels were a factor in causing stress. Michael Brown, CIOB deputy chief executive, said: “Most people would recognise that occupational health issues like stress, anxiety and depression are present in every industry. The construction industry however can in one breath be challenging and stimulating, providing exciting careers and a great sense of achievement, and in the next the pressures can take their toll raising stress levels and tipping individuals into anxiety and depression.” He added: “The research also shows that only 6 per cent of those who have suffered stress admit to having taken time off as a direct result. However, 51 per cent of respondents indicated that taking time off helps them to cope with occupational stress. This difference may be due to a perception that they would be stigmatised and that there would be a negative impact on their career if they admitted to suffering from stress.” Research by the International Labour Office concluded construction workers were near the top of the work stress league table.

- [CIOB news release](#) and full report [[pdf](#)].

Asbestos misery continues

Asbestos continues to blight the lives of workers and their families, causing deaths from cancer, breathing disorders and “natural causes” like heart disease. An inquest last month heard that Leslie Lee died after being exposed to asbestos at the Wagon Works factory in Gloucester. The 83-year-old’s wife Peggy told the inquest that her husband worked with asbestos on a regular basis. Pathologist Dr Jonathan Christie-Brown said Mr Lee had died suddenly and that there was evidence of asbestos exposure and heart disease. He said the cause of death was heart disease and asbestosis. Gloucestershire coroner Alan Crickmore recorded a verdict that Mr Lee died of an industrial disease. He said: “It may be a stopping of the heart that caused his death but the propensity to suffer that fate was increased by the asbestosis.” The family of a Sheffield asbestos cancer victim are appealing for witnesses to support their claim for compensation. Widow Joan Stothard believes her husband George contracted the incurable asbestos-related cancer mesothelioma as a result of exposures between 1970 and 1996 while he was a sewerage worker with Sheffield Council in its former guise as Sheffield Corporation. Mr Stothard was 62 when he died on 21 February 2004, just four months after being diagnosed. The council is denying liability. In the UK, at least five people a day die from this asbestos cancer.

- [Gloucestershire Echo](#). [Yorkshire Post](#). [Irwin Mitchell news release](#).
- Anyone with information on asbestos exposures at the former Sheffield Corporation’s works department, should contact Martin Hayward at Irwin Mitchell on 0870 1500 100.

Employer to blame for suicide

The firm that employed a man who killed himself years after suffering an injury at work is liable for his death, the Court of Appeal has ruled. Thomas Corr, then aged 31, had almost all his right ear severed at the Luton IBC van factory while fixing a machine. Six years later, in May 2002, he took his own life after suffering headaches, tinnitus and severe depression. The High Court originally ruled IBC Vehicles were not responsible for his death but that ruling has now been overturned. Mr Corr’s widow, Eileen, had gone to the High Court in April 2005 to sue for £750,000 because of the pain and suffering caused after the industrial accident ([Risks 205](#)). IBC Vehicles, which produces vans for Vauxhall Motors in Luton, admitted liability for the workplace accident but denied that its responsibility extended to him taking his own life six years later. This was accepted in the High Court when Deputy Judge Nigel Baker QC ruled against Mrs Corr, awarding her just £82,520 after finding IBC could not be held responsible for her husband’s suicide. This was overturned on a majority ruling at the Appeal Court with damages to be agreed at a later date. Lord Justice Sedley said all the evidence suggested there was no other cause of Mr Corr’s suicide other than the injury he suffered at work, and he was previously a “rational man”. He said: “The suicide was proved to have been a function of the depression and so formed part of the damage for which IBC were liable.” He added that to treat Mr Corr as responsible for his own death was an “unjustified exception” to modern views on the links between accidents and their causes. Hazards magazine reported in 2003 that the work-related suicide toll in the UK was likely to exceed 100 deaths per year, caused by factors including overwork, stress and harassment. None of these deaths will be included in workplace death figures ([Risks 118](#)). Thomas Corr’s death is the latest in a series of UK suicides linked to work factors ([Risks 244](#)). Occupational suicide is an official work disease in Japan ([Risks 175](#)).

- [BBC News Online](#). [Personnel Today](#).
- Hazards [worked to death](#) and [suicide](#) webpages.

Waitress wins harassment payout

A waitress made ill by the sexual harassment she experienced is to be paid £124,000 in compensation by a leading London restaurant. The London employment tribunal heard of a culture of bullying and harassment at the kitchen of Harry's Bar in Mayfair. Ilaria Signoriello, 26, was found to be a victim of unlawful discrimination and unlawful dismissal by the restaurant and executive chef Alberico Penati, 49. During the three-day hearing, Ms Signoriello said she was once grabbed by the shoulders and pushed against the wall by Mr Penati who started to kiss her neck. She added that the chef viewed women as sex objects and used sexist terms. She later became ill and was certified as unfit for work because of stress caused by his conduct. Solicitor Ann Bevington said Ms Signoriello had suffered "great distress and injury". She said: "Ms Signoriello hopes that, in this way, a positive benefit to others may come of the terrible experiences which led to this claim, and further hopes that others suffering sexual harassment in the workplace may be encouraged to take action to challenge their treatment." The tribunal awarded her £118,701 for the unlawful discrimination and £5,520 for aggravated damages and compensation.

- [The Times](#). [The Sun](#). [BBC News Online](#). [Lifestyle Extra](#).

Cocklers criticised after rescue

Two boats overloaded with cocklers and cockles got in to difficulties and had to be assisted by lifeboats the day after a gangmaster was jailed over the deaths of 21 cockle pickers in Morecambe Bay ([Risks 250](#)). Furious coastguard officials said those concerned had "learned nothing" from recent incidents. Lifeboat crews from Silloth in Cumbria joined others in an operation coordinated by Liverpool Coastguard when the two boats got into difficulties. A man

from Morecambe was in control of one inflatable craft, which had broken down while towing a second. Sue Todd, rescue co-ordination manager at Liverpool Coastguard, said: "Clearly they have learned nothing from their previous experience and continue to put to sea in vessels, which are not equipped to be out during the hours of darkness. They had no navigation lights, no VHF radio and their stability was compromised due to the overloading of cockles." She added: "The Coastguard, RNLI and other independent lifeboats exist to save life at sea and not to routinely rescue individuals who have no concern for their own safety or the safety of others. It is common sense and good practice to ensure that your engine is maintained and reliable, that your vessel is not overloaded and that you are equipped to such an extent that you are able to raise the alarm and provide positional information to HM Coastguard - none of which was evident on this or the previous occasion."

- [Maritime and Coastguard Agency news release](#). BBC News Online on [the rescue](#) and on the [coastguard fury](#).

New strategy to protect vulnerable workers

A new government strategy aims to protect the most vulnerable workers from rogue employers. The initiative, which sets out to ensure all workers benefit from extended employment rights introduced by the government, is spelled out in a DTI strategy paper, 'Success at work - protecting vulnerable workers'. Trade and industry secretary Alan Johnson said: "The new rights we have introduced are taking root - from the National Minimum Wage to the right to four weeks annual leave. This means we can now concentrate our enforcement on the minority of bad businesses who take advantage of the most vulnerable workers, further protecting such workers and benefiting legitimate companies." He said the government would fulfil its commitment to make time equivalent to bank holidays additional to annual holiday entitlement. The strategy acknowledges that many of the most vulnerable people currently

have no choice but to eat into their existing four weeks entitlement if they wish to take a day's leave on a bank holiday. New measures would be introduced to identify rogue employers and to improve telephone and online advice to workers. Commenting on the new strategy, TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "We welcome these firm pledges to press ahead with Labour manifesto commitments such as ending the loophole that allows UK employers to include bank holidays as part of Europe's minimum paid holiday entitlement." He added: "Flowing through this document is a recognition by government that a significant minority of the UK workforce faces real exploitation at work. We look forward to working with government to end abuse, and, no doubt, resisting employer attempts to pull its teeth."

- [DTI news release](#). [TUC news release](#). [Success at work](#).

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Global: Asbestos trade to face building campaign

The global asbestos trade is going to face an unprecedented worldwide assault on Workers' Memorial Day, 28 April. Global construction unions' federation BWI is organising a worldwide series of activities on 28 April, calling on governments and employers to commit to a global ban on the production, import, export and use of asbestos products. BWI says 100 building industry unions around the world will take part in activities ranging from rallies to educational and training events. It says Canadian government backing for the asbestos industry will be a specific trade union target, as BWI affiliates engage in peaceful demonstrations and petitions at Canada's embassies and consulates. BWI wants the Canadian government to call a halt to its aggressive marketing and promotion of asbestos in countries including India, Indonesia, Zimbabwe and Brazil ([Risks 247](#)). A BWI 28 April briefing note says there are now more

deaths in construction from the asbestos cancer mesothelioma alone than from falls. It says with in excessive of 100,000 asbestos related deaths each year, these diseases now outstrip deaths from industrial accidents in many countries. According to BWI general secretary Anita Normark: "Today's exposures guarantee an epidemic lasting at least another generation, with the asbestos graveyards shifting from the developed to the developing world." Some Canadian unions are backing the BWI call. Transport union UTU is calling on the Canadian premier Stephen Harper to ban the use and export of asbestos, while ensuring a "just transition" for workers employed in asbestos-related industries.

- [BWI Workers' Memorial Day briefing and resources](#). [BWI news release](#). [BWI safety webpages](#). [UTU news release](#).
- [TUC Workers' Memorial Day webpage](#). [Hazards webpage on Workers' Memorial Day worldwide](#).
- Order your Workers' Memorial Day posters (free), 'forget-me-knot' ribbons (£25/100) and 'Union workplaces are safer workplaces' car stickers (£1 each; large discounts for bulk orders) from the [Hazards Campaign](#) online or from [Hazards Campaign](#), c/o GMHC, Windrush Millennium Centre, 70 Alexandra Road, Manchester M16 7WD. Tel: 0161 636 7557.

Global: Rail campaign puts safety on track

Transport unions across the world led a unified campaign to promote a culture of safety on the railways during this year's ITF International Railway Action Day. More than 30 ITF-affiliated unions from over 25 countries used the annual day of action on 27 March to highlight key safety concerns. ITF inland transport section secretary Mac Urata commented: "At a time when more and more rail networks are being privatised, it is vital that unions are part of the process to re-establish a safety culture in the

industry to ensure that profit does not come before safety.” In London, rail union RMT stepped up its campaign against a planned downgrading of fire regulations on the capital’s underground system, and took their protest to the doorstep of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

- [ITF news release. International Railway Workers' Action Day 2006.](#)

USA: Immigration safety stings to stop

US federal officials have told immigrant advocates that government immigration agents will discontinue the use of undercover sting operations involving bogus health and safety programmes to round up illegal immigrants. The immigration service ruse generated a storm of protest in July last year when federal agents arrested 48 workers at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina on illegal immigration charges after the agents tricked the workers into attending what was billed as a mandatory training session sponsored by the official safety watchdog OSHA ([Risks 215](#)). Worker advocates and immigrant groups complained that such activity would discourage immigrant workers from reporting safety violations or seeking help from safety officials at a time when Hispanics were suffering a disproportionately high rate of injuries and fatalities ([Risks 223](#)). Now Marcy M Forman, director of investigations for the Department of Homeland Security's immigration and customs enforcement division (ICE), has written to foodworkers’ union UFCW to say federal officials were discontinuing the practice. “This is exactly the action that ICE should have taken,” said Jackie Nowell, the union’s safety director. “Using health and safety as a ruse to catch workers is definitely the wrong way to go when immigrant workers are being killed and injured in far greater numbers than other workers.”

- [UFCW news release.](#) Letter to UFCW from the immigration service [[pdf](#)]. [Confined Space.](#)

USA: Union takes on asbestos tests

A union-backed health and safety centre is screening US sheet metal workers for asbestos related diseases. The nationwide screening programme is being undertaken by the Sheet Metal Occupational Health Institute, which says it takes about 20 years of exposure to asbestos before scarring of the lungs or other problems can be detected. The screenings are being offered, at no charge, to retired union members and workers with 20 or more years experience in the trade. The union says previous screenings have found that one in three sheet metal workers has asbestosis, a potentially deadly scarring of the lungs which is also linked to an increased risk of lung cancer. The programme is intended to detect the problems early, make medical recommendations to affected workers, and offer suggestions on how to make the workplace safer. The screenings, which are free to the employees, are jointly financed by the union and employers.

- KSDK.com [story](#) and [video report.](#) [Sheet Metal Occupational Health Institute.](#)

RESOURCES

Coal mining’s deadly legacy



Last century, the most modern, thriving economies were built on dirty, difficult and dangerous jobs. In the US and the UK a plentiful supply of deep mined coal was key to economic success. This meant millions of miners over several generations faced every day the possibility of fire, explosions, asphyxiation and roof collapses. And for those who escaped the immediate risks, there was a good chance of developing a disabling or fatal occupational disease ([Risks 248](#)). Strong union organisation was critical to securing and maintaining health and safety improvements.

Award-winning US photo journalist Earl Dotter has joined with the Appalachian Institute at Wheeling Jesuit University to produce a powerful new photo exhibit, ‘Our future in retrospect: Coal miner health in Appalachia,’ chronicling the impact of these jobs on mining communities. The exhibit is dedicated to the 21 coal miners killed in West Virginia, Kentucky, Utah and Maryland this year ([Risks 239](#)) – a year that has already seen the mines fatality toll near the total for 2005. It combines Dotter’s present-day look at health and safety issues in America’s coalfields with Russell W Lee’s 1946, President Truman-commissioned, documentary photography on the issues in coal communities - mining fatalities and occupational diseases and poor nutrition, water quality and housing. The investigation, which led to new mine safety laws, was in response to a 1946 mineworkers’ strike provoked by appalling health and safety conditions. The photo exhibit will be on view at the Washington DC HQ of US national union federation AFL-CIO until May Day. It can also be viewed on the Appalachian Institute website. The online resource includes detailed briefings on the health, safety and social issues facing mining communities, past and present. The lessons apply equally well in the UK as the US, although with just seven deep coal mines still in operation in the UK, there is a lot more disease and hardship in many traditional mining communities than there is decent work. Britain has hundreds of thousands of ex-miners, but only a few thousand are still working in the industry.

- [Our future in retrospect? Coal miner health in Appalachia. Earl Dotter, photojournalist. AFL-CIO Now. Confined Space.](#)

Radon gas at work

The TUC has published a short online safety reps’ guide to the hazards of radon gas. It says although it does not get the same level of attention as other risks, radon gas is probably one of the biggest killers of workers within those areas where there is high exposure. It can be a major cause of lung cancer if allowed to build up

in workplaces. Radon is a radioactive gas that occurs in some parts of the UK. It is produced when uranium in rocks such as granite decays. Where there is a likelihood of risk the employer has a legal responsibility to monitor radon within all buildings. These areas are mainly parts of Devon and Cornwall, but high concentrations are also found in Somerset, Derbyshire, Northamptonshire, pockets of Wales and Northern Ireland and north east Scotland. However not every part of these areas is affected. Although radon gas is most common in areas where granite occurs, other parts of the country can also have high levels. In total an estimated 16,000 workplaces have radon levels above the permitted maximum. The guide says all safety representatives within those areas where there is a likely risk are strongly urged to seek copies of both risk assessments and radon level readings for their workplace. TUC says by taking simple precautionary measures it is possible to prevent a considerable number of workers dying needlessly.

- [TUC radon gas guide.](#)

Noise at work regulations guide

The new Noise at Work Regulations took effect on 6 April ([Risks 250](#)). The new rules put the onus on firms to identify measures to eliminate or reduce risks from exposure to noise at work rather than simply relying on hearing protection, although this may also be needed in the short term. A TUC online factsheet for safety representatives advises them how to ensure the new rules are adhered to. Neil Budworth, president of safety professionals’ organisation IOSH, has also backed calls for effective action to reduce workplace noise levels. “It’s important to remember that we have people working longer hours and retiring later in life, which means exposure to noise can be greater than in the past,” he said. “Sometimes, sadly, it’s only when people retire that they realise just how deaf their work has made them.”

- [TUC Noise at Work Regulations factsheet](#). [IOSH news release](#).
- HSE [noise webpage](#) and simple guide to the regulations [[pdf](#)].

Who says safety is boring?

If you think safety is just of interest to the fanatical few, you are wrong. You've just got to package the information right. 'Confined Space', a decidedly political, deliciously provocative US safety 'blog' – thought to be the world's first – has just nabbed a major online award. Editor Jordan Barab received this year's Koufax Award for the best single issue blog, pipping several high class, more mainstream productions. Confined Space combines up-to-the-minute news with brutal and brutally funny analysis of the business-friendly, worker-deadly political manoeuvres that ensure 21st century workplaces are still killing us. The blog's "weekly toll" column – a digest of press reports of workplace fatalities – is probably the most devastating indictment of the US government's disregard for safety available anywhere. Confined Space has become a must-see for the US safety crowd, has just topped 500,000 visitors on its 3rd birthday and deserves a wider audience still. Read it now – just don't desert Risks.

- [Confined Space](#). [Koufax Awards](#).

EVENTS AND COURSES

Work Wise Week, 3-9 May 2006

Organisations and employees across the UK are being invited to take part in Work Wise Week from 3 to 9 May 2006 to help create a 'smarter' working Britain. The TUC-backed initiative is asking them to spend the week trying out smarter working practices, such as flexible working, mobile working, remote working and working from home, so they can see for

themselves the benefits and practicalities of this modern day approach to working. Specific proposals include: Allowing staff to come in either an hour later or an hour earlier to avoid the rush, with a reciprocal hour shift at the end of the day; allowing staff to take a half hour lunch break each day, and then let them leave at 3.00pm on the last day; and allowing staff to work from home on Friday 5 May. Even a small reduction in the number of people travelling on the roads or by public transport on that day will have a significant effect on congestion and overcrowding, the organisers say. And that means a reduction in commuter stress.

- Work Wise Week, 3-9 May 2006, [news release](#) and [website](#).

Business of health conference, 26-27 June 2006, London

A two-day June conference organised by the Metropolitan Police Federation will deal with key workplace health concerns, including workplace health and well-being, bullying, infection risks and control, back pain prevention, violence, lone working, substance misuse, trauma and crisis management, stress and work-life balance.

- The business of health, work and wellbeing conference, Heathrow Marriott Hotel, London, 26-27 June 2006. Delegate fee for the two days (not including accommodation), £290 plus VAT. Conference programme and application form [[pdf](#)].

TUC courses for safety reps

COURSES FOR JANUARY TO MARCH 2006

- [Northern](#), [North West](#) [South East](#), [Yorkshire and the Humber](#), [South West](#), [Midlands](#), [Scotland](#)

COURSES FOR APRIL TO JULY 2006

- [North West](#), [South East](#), [Yorkshire and the Humber](#), [South West](#), [Midlands](#), [Scotland](#)

USEFUL LINKS

- **Visit** the TUC <http://www.tuc.org.uk/h> and [s/](http://www.tuc.org.uk/s) website pages on health and safety. See what's on offer from [TUC Publications](#) and [What's On in health and safety](#).
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